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GLOSSARY

Abrader - a stone tool used to grind and rub softer stone or bone to make tools.

Absolute dating - measuring time by assigning calendar dates to artifacts and other archaeological remains.

Adze or celt - a stone blade that is ground, shaped, polished, and usually hafted to a handle to be used for woodcarving.

Anthropology - the study of human beings, from its beginnings millions of years ago to the present day. Anthropology can be divided into four sub-disciplines; archaeology, linguistics, cultural anthropology, and biological/physical anthropology.

Archaeologist - a person who studies the past by looking at the material remains that people left behind.

Archaeology - a way of studying the past by looking at the material remains that people left behind.

Archaeological material - remains found in archaeological sites such as artifacts, plant and animal remains, and features.

Archaeological site - a place where human activity occurred and material remains were left behind.

Artifact - an object made or used by people.

Awl - a tool usually made from animal bone with a pointed end used for sewing, punching holes in hides, and basket weaving.

Beam - the main stem of an antler, often used to make wedges.

Before Present (B.P.) - the way archaeologists express dates for artifacts, archaeological sites, and other cultural resources.

Berm - a terrace formed by wave action along the backshore of a beach.

Blade - the main section of a projectile point that is pointed and usually roughly triangular in shape.

Bit - the sharpened end of a tool such as a chisel or wedge.

Bipoint - a small piece of bone pointed at both ends. A bipoint was usually attached to a fishhook or shaft for catching fish.

Bluff - a cliff or hill with a broad steep face.

Botanical sample - a small quantity of soil containing remains of plant fibers or seeds used by archaeologists for analysis.

Carbon 14 Dating or Radiocarbon Dating - a method of finding out how old an object is by measuring the amount of carbon 14 atoms it contains.

Chisel - a tool with a tapered or beveled end that was usually attached to a handle and used for woodcarving.

Chronology - the determination of dates and the sequence of events in the order that they occurred.

Coniferous trees - a tree with needle or scaly leaves that bears cones.

Context - the location in which an artifact is found and the other artifacts or features that were found near that artifact.

Component - one of five time periods defined by archaeologists in constructing the chronology of West Point. Components were determined by studying the stratigraphy of the site and conducting radiocarbon tests on material collected from the site.

Core - the inner piece of stone that remains after outer sections of the stone have been chipped and flaked away to make tools.

Cultural deposits - evidence of human activity found in the ground such as artifacts, and plant and animal remains.

Culture - a system of beliefs, values, knowledge, and behavior that is shared among a particular group of people through language, symbols, concepts, and traditions.

Deciduous trees - a tree that sheds or loses its leaves at the end of the growing season.

Debitage - pieces of stone that have been removed from a tool during manufacture, sharpening or repair.

Diet - the usual food and drink of a person or animal.

Drilling - a method to create a perforation, hole, or hollowed area.

Ethnography - descriptions of people and cultures by anthropologists based on observations and/or interactions with the people themselves.

Ethnographic village – a place occupied by people during historic times and described by anthropologists, early explorers, or native people.

Excavate – to systematically remove layers of dirt from an archaeological site.

Feature - material remains that cannot be removed from an archaeological site in one piece such as a fire hearth, or rock oven.

Fire Modified Rock (FMR) - rocks that have been modified as a result of exposure to heat and fire. Fire modified rocks might have been heated and used for cooking or were sometimes part of features such as a hearth or oven.

Flake - a piece of stone that has been chipped away from a core or larger flake. Flakes were either used, shaped into other tools, or discarded.

Flintknapping - the process of making chipped stone tools.

Graver - a tool with a sharp point or edge usually hafted to a handle and used for incising fine lines or carving thin grooves in wood or bone artifacts. Gravers are usually made of stone but are sometimes made from animal teeth.

Grid - a way of dividing a site into square sections in order to map the exact location of objects.

Grinding – a method of rubbing an abrading stone against the surface of an artifact to achieve a smooth finish.

Habitat – the place where plants and animals live.

Hafting - attaching stone, bone, antler, or shell tools such as projectile points, knives, or blades to a shaft or handle. Prehistoric tools were often hafted to a shaft or handle using sinew or plant fibers.

Hammerstone - a percussion tool usually made from a smoothed cobble and used for shaping stone tools, removing flakes, or woodworking.

Hypothesis - an idea that can be further investigated and proved.

Inference - a conclusion derived from observations.

In situ - artifacts or features found and recorded in place.

Incise - a method of cutting a fine line into the surface of an object, to engrave.

Indirect percussion – a method of flaking stone; the hammer does not directly hit the artifact, but strikes an intermediary blunt-pointed tool.

Labret - also called a lip plug; a labret is an ornament worn below the lower lip and chin.

Landform – a feature that makes up the earth's surface.

Lithic – a stone tool or stone debris resulting from the manufacture or repair of tools.

Matrix (pl. matrices) – the groundmass that surrounds and contains archaeological material such as artifacts, plant and animal remains, and features.

Midden - a place where material such as a shell, stone, and bone was discarded or sometimes stored for later use.

Observation - something that is learned by looking or watching.

Pecking – a stone-working technique; shaping a stone by sharply and repeatedly hitting it with a stone of greater hardness.

Percussion Flaking - a method used in making stone tools in which a percussion tool such as a striker or hammerstone removes flakes to shape the artifact.

Prehistoric - the period of time before recorded history; the absolute date for the prehistoric period varies from place to place.

Pressure Flaking - a method used in making stone tools to remove small flakes from the edges of an artifact and refine precise details on the artifact with a bone or antler tool.

Projectile point - a particular kind of chipped stone tool that is pointed on one end and usually attached to a shaft such as an arrow or spear to be used for hunting or fishing.

Procure – to get by special effort, obtain or acquire: such as procuring resources by hunting, gathering and fishing.

Provenience - the location of artifacts found in association with other physical remains.

Radiocarbon dating – a scientific method to find out how old material is by measuring the amount of carbon-14 atoms that it contains. The result of a radiocarbon test is an age in years before present (B.P.).

Relative dating – determining whether something such as an artifact, stratum or site is older or younger than something else without knowing its age in years.

Replica - a copy of an original artifact that intends to reproduce the qualities and characteristics of the original as closely as possible without meaning to deceive.

Sandspit – a narrow point of land extending into a body of water.

Scraper – a chipped stone tool that was used somewhat like a knife for tasks such as scraping fish scales or hides.

Screening - the process of sifting soil through a mesh wire screen in order to separate archaeological material from the matrix.

Shoulder - the area of a projectile point that angles from the bottom corner of the blade to the stem in order to facilitate attaching the blade to a staff.

Site Form - a standardized form that archaeologists use to record information about a site such as site number, name, location, description, and features.

Stem - the narrow end of a projectile point that is attached to a shaft.

Stratigraphy – the layers of dirt deposited over time and revealed by excavation.

Stratum (pl. strata) – a layer of dirt of varying depth and horizontal span that can be identified by archaeologists by characteristics such as color, grain size, or proportion of shell or gravel.

Subsidence – a geologic term to describe a landform that has sunk to a lower or normal level.

Subsistence – the activities required to meet the basic needs, usually referring to the quest for food.

Technology - the methods and techniques used to do or produce something such as hunting, fishing, woodworking, or tool making.

Test Unit - an isolated square unit that is excavated in order to determine the nature and distribution of cultural deposits throughout the site.

Tine - the tip of antler, often used to make wedges.

Topographic map - a detailed map that shows surface features and changes in elevation.

Tsunami – an ocean wave caused by an undersea earthquake.

Unipoint – a bone tool pointed on one end.

Unit - an area of a specific size that is measured and marked off for excavation. The units excavated at West Point were 1 x 1 meter squares.

Wedge - a tool usually made of bone or antler and used with mauls and adzes for heavy woodworking tasks such as splitting wood planks for houses and canoes.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LOCAL RESOURCES

Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture

University of Washington

Box 353010

Seattle, WA 98195-3010

Education Department: (206) 543-5591

www.burkemuseum.org

Daybreak Star United Indians of All Tribes Cultural Center

(Located in Discovery Park)

PO Box 99253

Seattle, WA 98119

(206) 285-4425

Muckleshoot Tribe

Cultural Resources Department

39015 172nd Avenue SE

Auburn, WA 98002-9763

(253) 939-3311

Suquamish Museum

15838 Sandy Hook Road

Suquamish, WA 98392

(360) 394-5247

Tulalip Tribes

Cultural Resources Department

6410 23rd Avenue NE

Tulalip, WA 98271

(360) 651-3300

Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

112 21st Avenue SW

Olympia, WA 98504-8353

(360) 753-4405

www.cted.wa.gov/info/lgd/oahp

Washington State Historical Society and Washington State History Museum
1911 Pacific Avenue
Tacoma, WA 98402
(888) 238-4373
www.wshs.org

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Society for American Archaeology (SAA)
900 Second Street ,NE Suite #12
Washington, D.C. 20002-3357
(202) 789-8200
www.saa.org

National Park Service (NPS) - Cultural Resources
Departmental Consulting Archeologist
Archeology and Ethnography Program
National Park Service, DOI
PO Box 37127, Mail Stop 2275
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127
(202) 343-4101
www.cr.nps.gov

Center for American Archeology (CAA)
Kampsville, IL
(618) 653-4511
www.caa-archeology.org

Smithsonian Institution
Smithsonian Center for Education - Resources for Educators
www.educate.si.edu

National Museum of Natural History
Anthropology Outreach Office
(202) 357-1592
www.nmnh.si.edu/anthro/outreach

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